has also framed another preliminary proposal, "Development and beautification of the river, front of Guwahti City from Sukhleshwar to Kamakhaya temple and protection of the reach from erosion of river Brahmaputra" with an approximate cost of Rs. 30.69 crore to stabilise the reach. The Brahmaputra Board is also seized of this matter for taking up necessary measures.

Arsenic poison in Ganga basin

2152. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that 449 million people in the Ganga basin are exposed to the danger of Arsenic poison;

(b) whether it is a fact that nearly 36 million people in Bengal delta alone are drinking contaminated water;

(c) whether any study has been conducted in this regard; and

(d) the details of steps taken by Government and future plans?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) to (c) As per the studies conducted by Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) under Ministry of Water Resources, arsenic contamination in ground water in the lower Gangetic plain of West Bengal has been indentified sporadically in a linear tract extending from southern part of Malda district (North of Ganga river) through Murshidabad, Nadia, North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas districts to the east of Bhagirathi and Bardhaman, Howrah and Hoogly district of West of Bhagirathi. At present 67 blocks of 8 districts of West Bengal have been identified to have arsenic contamination in ground water more than the permissible limit of 0.05 milligram/litre.

(d) Steps taken by the Government include:-

(i) Government of West Bengal has taken up surface water schemes in Malda and South 24 Parganas districts.

(ii) State Government of West Bengal has installed Arsenic Treatment Units at a number of places.

(iii) Construction of Replacement tubewells by Government of West Bengal in Arsenic affected districts.

(iv) CGWB has carried out explorations at 50 nos. of sites in the arsenic affected areas. Out of these, 34 nos. of successful tubewells have been handed over to PHED, Government of West Bengal for piped water supply scheme.

(v) CGWB has implemented Artificial Recharge projects to dilute the arsenic contaminated ground water.

(vi) Department of Drinking Water Supply has launched programmes with the objective to provide safe-drinking facilities in rural habitations affected by water quality problems like fluorosis, arsenic, nitrate etc.

CGWB is in the process of undertaking studies to find out occurrence of arsenic in ground water in other parts of the country.

Decline in ground water level in Madhya Pradesh

†2153. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that level of ground water in many districts of Madhya Pradesh has declined steeply from its normal level;

(b) the reasons therefor and remedical measures taken in this regard; and

(c) whether Government are assisting States to enable them to provide potable water; if so, the amount of money given to Madhya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The main reasons for decline in ground water level are rapid pace of urbanisation, increasing demand for agricultural, industrial and domestic

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.